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THE MORAL DISCIPLINE OF GIVING.

A

SERMON,

BEFORE THE

AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

FOR

FOREIGN MISSIONS,

AT THE

MEETING IN DETROIT, MICHIGAN,

SEPTEMBER 7, 1858.

BY GEORGE SHEPARD, D. D.

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AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR FOREIGN MISSIONS.

DETROIT, MICH., SEPT. 9, 1858.

Resolved, That the thanks of the Board be presented to the Rev. Dr. SHEPARD for his Sermon, and that he be requested to furnish a copy for publication.

Attest,

SAMUEL M. WORCESTER, *Rec. Secretary.*

SERMON.

LUKE xi. 41.

BUT RATHER GIVE ALMS OF SUCH THINGS AS YE HAVE; AND BEHOLD, ALL THINGS ARE CLEAN UNTO YOU.

Christ, being invited, went in to dine with a Pharisee. His host marveled that he sat down to meat without first washing; whereupon the Lord addressed him and other Pharisees gathered with him: "Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and platter, but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness." Did not he that made that which is without, make that which is within also? Did not he who created the body, create the soul also? And is it not at least equally proper and important that the inner part, the soul, partake of the cleansing and the purity?

Assuming that it is important, our Lord proceeds to prescribe a mode by which the moral cleansing, the purity, may be obtained: "But rather give alms of such things as ye have; and behold, all things are clean unto you." These words present somewhat of difficulty, when we consider that they were addressed to a company of Pharisees, inasmuch as the Pharisees were notoriously given to

the performance of these outward acts of charity. They did these outward things, and remained all vile within. An outward injunction, in their case, could hardly touch the infected spot.

Some suppose that the Savior spake in an ironical strain. As it regards your inward parts, all you have to do is to go on with your tithing system of mint and rue, anise and cummin, and all is clean to you—yours a perfect purity down to the bottom of your hearts. This view we cannot admit. The Lord, we think, spoke seriously; uttered before them a great truth, not a stinging sarcasm.

If we suppose that the company of Pharisees gathered on that occasion were, as many were, exceedingly avaricious, given to the getting of gains by the closest and hardest means, and were also given so to hold on upon their possessions that they could not, by any means, be brought to devote them in charity, in any worthy measure, then the Savior's words, which struck at their pockets, would have also a deeper aim, and strike and enter their hearts.

The difficulty abiding in these words comes from the fact that so much efficacy is assigned to an outward performance. A great commentator, however, remarks, in mitigation of this, that it was the manner of the Savior to command an outward act as a sign of the disposition, instead of enjoining the disposition itself. But here the giving act is put in a somewhat different relation. It seems to be put as an antecedent, a means to an end—cause to an effect. Giving according to the right stand-

ard and mode, is promotive of the soul's discipline—its growth in moral purity, holiness.

I come to this, then, as the main topic of my discourse: Giving of what God may have given us as the means of disciplining, purifying, elevating the character. And I might speak of this discipline as both retrospective and prospective.

In regard to the retrospective action, a few words will suffice; and these are suggested by the context. It is clearly implied that those addressed by the Savior were given to injustice. They had sought extortions and wrongful gains. In the strong phrase of Christ, "Your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness;" all there greedy, rapacious, grasping. What now follows as duty in such a case? This, first, and without delay: 'Repent and return from such ways. From being injurious, rapacious men, become generous men; do justly, deal kindly.' Then, farther, the gospel enjoins this: 'Redress past wrongs; make reparation, restitution, as far as it can be done.' But there are cases where it cannot be done. Those who were the subjects of the wrong, and all their representatives, have passed away, and can no more be found. Or the wrong is so complex, so woven into the web of other things, that it cannot be separated and acted upon, so as to be set right directly and specifically. Where this is the condition of things, what then? Here let charity apply her corrective: "Give alms of such things as ye have, and all things are clean unto you." This disposition and distribution of the estate got by hard means, indicate a softening of the character,

even the genuineness of the repentance. At once the conscience is relieved, and the heart is made better by the course taken. The possessions which the individual feels are not his and cannot be put back whence they were wrongfully taken, he chooses to make over to the Great Proprietor of all, by devoting them to his service in the welfare of his creatures. This is the most natural dictate of the heart, once base and wrong, into which the spirit of religion and reform has entered. So was it in the case of Zaccheus. Half of his goods he gave to the poor; then the most generous restitution to all whom he had defrauded. Who can doubt the integrity, the moral purity of that heart henceforth? Who doubt that all the residue of his estate was clean unto him? Who doubt that from that time he began truly to possess and enjoy his own?

This is what we may call the backward correction, the retrospective discipline of benevolence. It is not the giving of a portion of ill-gotten wealth to sanctify the rest, also and equally ill-gotten. The principle does not touch such a case. Such a case is only and intensely atrocious and abominable. This is simply a case both of generousness and justice where the opposites of these had been.

We suggest whether this backward correction, this retrospective discipline, should not be matter of thought and consideration now: whether the Lord's cause and the welfare of men would not receive means for their promotion, if there were more inquiring and acting in this direction;—the Lord's treasury receiving numberless fragments,

and some huge masses, which are now in hands that would be better off without them. Let each take the candle of the Lord and pass through his own premises—its rays penetrating all the tortuous intricacies of the past, and then let him do what this revealing light shall teach him to do; and he will be likely to do both generously and well; certainly, be likely to improve his standing for this world and the world to come.

But I pass now to what is more generally applicable and practical—the present and prospective discipline of the spirit and habit of giving—giving as a means of spiritual advance, of growth in moral purity; all within, and all pertaining to one becoming clean, pure. The word used here is the same used by Christ in that other place: "Blessed are the pure in heart."

In order to make a man clean, pure, particularly a character like that contemplated by Christ in the text, certain evil and corrupting things are to be removed out of him. There is to be an ejectment of the corrupt and corrupting, in the process of attaining to the clean, the pure. And one in the category of the corrupt and the corrupting—and this a main one, abiding at the fountain—a grand promoter and feeder in the wrong direction—is the love of money. So Paul names it, and then attaches to it this primal and terrible potency, *root* of all evil—pronouncing the love of money the root of all evil. He means that love of it, which leads the individual harboring this passion, to address himself to the work of getting it—accumulating, heaping it together; this his end, his great

object in living. The Apostle shows this to be his meaning, in the verse immediately preceding, where he uses another phraseology, "They that will be rich;" this is the working and the end of the passion. It resolves itself into the will to be rich. Christ's word chosen to describe it, yields the same idea on being subjected to an analysis; his word is covetousness, which means, etymologically—have more—the desire to have more.

This, as a very common desire or passion in the human soul, is quite obvious, showing itself on every hand in the schemes and the toils to get more. This, as being an evil desire, most fruitful of mischief, Paul portrays in that flaming sketch: "They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition." This passion, how sure to grow! If the person dare indulge it, it will grow and get stronger than he; increasing still in capacity, in greediness, in clamor, ever ringing the repetitious cry: 'Give! give!' The already vast quantity of possession only adds vehemence to the cry: 'More! yet more!'

And under its influence, what wrongs, oppressions, crimes, are enacted! And what follies, too! This rage for more, in its height and intensity, seems not only to blind the eyes, but strangely to abate the brains. The Savior, in addressing one of the sort,—a representative man, doubtless, to resort to the modern parlance,—used upon him the rather curt term, 'Thou fool.' Sometimes it is one by himself, 'Thou fool.' Sometimes—and have we not seen something of the kind?—large masses are

frenzied together. There stands forth pretty much a whole generation of fools, inciting and inflaming one another—expanding and spreading out, till there comes a crash and a conclusion; and the whole surface is seen strewn with wrecks of character and fortune. There follows a wholesome pause; and one would suppose that some abiding wisdom would be derived from the meditations and amazements of the compulsory silence; certainly, suppose that such a course and result never could be repeated by the same individuals, or their immediate successors. But it is repeated. The same ones, with the smart of the old chastisement in their skins, and the indented bruise of it in their bones, will spring forth, eager to reënact the same old fury. So it is that this desire grows when allowed, and maddens men, and ruins characters, fortunes, and souls.

It is plain, as I have already intimated, that in the course or process of becoming clean and pure, this evil desire must be repressed, and even put out. We come now to hint the way of doing it.

One way, a most legitimate and summary way—may I not say *the* way, no other being wanted?—*is this*, namely, by giving. Let a person give alms of such things as he has, and he will be cleansed of this foul and ever-defiling desire or passion. But in order to the achievement of so great an end, there must be conditions to the giving. It must be principled, the result and flow of principles—principles in this Holy Book laid down, and by the heart cordially embraced;—not impulsive, giving as the fit takes, as the sympathies happen to be

stirred. Based on principle, uniform and habitual, it bears a just relation to the means God has put into our hands. This is one of the principles or laws in this matter, that the giving bear a fixed and just relation or proportion to the means placed at our disposal. And what is the proportion? or what the principle, the rule to be made?

This principle, that every one at stated times lay by him in store for this purpose, according as God has prospered him, would be sufficient, if we may suppose in him the thoroughly Christian heart. To add this, namely, Let him lay by for charity a generous proportion, is leaving it still quite too indefinite. To say a tenth of all that comes in, is greatly unequal. There is neither justice nor benevolence in this as the universal law of giving. For the object I have in view, this statement may be an approximate; at least, may stand preparatory to one more definite, namely, that a person give in measure and continuity sufficient to feel it. How little, probably, is given in the Church of God where this is the effect! How very few, probably, from the measure they give, have any, even the least, sensation of inconvenience. Of self-denial, and real sacrifice from giving, I suppose the great majority of Christian givers know nothing. In all such cases, of course, the entire personal benefit and discipline from giving, is lost. According to the statement now in hand, the sensation-principle, the tithe system, or the law of tenth, can be no general rule; for, in very many cases, the amount dictated by this rule would hardly be enough to throw any, even the smallest twinges, into the soul's cleaving

selfishness. A tenth can be given, and the man never know, by any appreciable diminution, that he has given any thing; of course, he can give all that, and vastly more, without beginning to feel it. What is done, is but shelling off some of the loose outer scales of one of these Leviathans of wealth. The giving, to be effectual as a discipline, must be on a principle that shall reach and restrict the desire for getting—the intent to have more; for all the mischief, and meanness, and smallness, lie in that—emanate from that. On that it is, all Scripture pours its intense and concentrated exprobation.

What principle and measure of giving, then, will administer to this the repressive, yea the annihilating blow? That principle which says, "By the grace of God, I will no more lay up treasure for myself," the person at once and forever renouncing the purpose, even crucifying the desire to be rich. Then, that measure or amount of giving, which accrues from giving the whole beyond a certain prescribed boundary. No accumulation of property, does this mean? No, not that. Accumulation there may be, and should be: and the amount, the extent of it, is to be settled in the best moments of Christian experience—under the most decisive action of the Christian spirit, and principle—a definite amount fixed under the felt meaning of that great vow of an entire consecration to Him. It may be thousands, or tens of thousands, or hundreds of thousands. More or less, this is its solemn condition and quality; it is a Christian amount —religiously retained as the means to still larger

deeds of giving and blessing. Here we have the man, all he has, and all his power of getting, possessing, diffusing, devoted to God. With him accumulation has this purpose—it is for God. It has this limitation—nothing for self—nothing beyond a solemnly prescribed amount; no indefinite laying up. It is a great step for a person to come to this point—costing a mighty wrestle, and the bloody sweat of the soul, probably, to renounce the purpose of personal and selfish getting—the intent of property, wealth. It is something every one will profoundly feel in the conflict—the actual doing it. Some have succeeded in the doing, and have stood forth noble examples of character, and prodigies in the line of giving.

We are sure that, in this repression and restriction just indicated, the course, the action, is right. There can be no mistake at this point. If this thirst for money, this purpose and practice of indefinite getting—all one can, to the end—if this is wrong—has on its face the indignant brand of Almighty God, then is it right for the disciple—made his duty by the law and spirit of his religion, to fix a limit, to build a Christian boundary some where to this fiery and rampant lust of humanity—desire of possession, to have more. This terrible lust—you can't pet it, play with it, and say, you will keep it under. No man can. No man can serve two masters. It will be one—a single allegiance; one up, and the other under. Hence the right, the necessity absolute, that there be ordained the broad line of demarkation—that there be dug

in the soul a deep and impassable trench between God and mammon.

Let us see now what is accomplished in the way of discipline—moral cleansing and keeping clean, by the action thus far. This first at the fountain—that great, generic, base, cloven-footed, all-defiling thing, the selfish, self-seeking—love of money, will to get it—this in the case supposed, is pretty much wiped from the heart by the one broad, introductory stroke, by that soul's counter and higher purpose, in that soul's true consecration. This higher and Christian purpose becomes the purge, which carries off the filth and slime of the old fever. This purpose, once enthroned in the soul, summarily subordinates and drives out the whole litter of mean and craven lusts. I knew one for years, and loved him, and learned of him, though officially his teacher, and deemed him the model giver of the State of Maine. This was his principle—his purpose. Early and with a true Christian heart, he marked off the sum to be retained, and fixed the boundary; and he made over all the rest, freely and broadly scattering it as it came. The love of money, the desire of holding, he often said, and more often showed, that he knew nothing of it. The faintest breath or motion from this source never, so far as he was conscious, stirred the outer surface of his soul. In the eight years of my connection with him, he gave away probably twice the sum which he reserved as the capital of his business and his beneficence. He is now in heaven, and can we suppose that he there regrets that measure of consecration and sacrifice?

Another thing: the central and despotic lust extinct, at least brought under, then the wrong deeds so apt to be perpetrated in the eagerness for gain, in the rage for yet more—no such deeds will ever be done. All business, all labors for the world, are sanctified by the soul's good purpose, are a part of the man's Christianity, the dictate of rectitude and benevolence. Never does such an one overreach and craftily haul in huge gains upon an already overgrown stock; never take advantage when he can, and grind the necessitous; never throw blight upon others' fortunes, that he may add brightness to his own. Not a dollar comes into his coffer dimmed and stained by his manner of obtaining it. It is all clean money. From all the temptations of business his comes forth an unsullied and honorable name. The great and kingly affection of religion, the love of the heart, abides unquestioned in the supremacy. The other graces take their proportion and place; all the impulses of a pure and genial nature blend to produce a character whose descriptive is goodness; its form, a winning, admirable symmetry.

Of such a character we find that generousness is a prominent, practical attribute. Let us, then, pass on and see how naturally and infallibly the principle I have indicated produces it; how surely it grows and benignly spreads under the soul's high purpose of restriction upon the world, and the purpose to be "rich toward God." We have already noted the fact, that it abolishes, at once crushes out, the leading cause of closeness, stinginess in a man—this cause, the desire of getting,

the fascination of accumulating—I want here the Greek's terser tongue, and the privilege to cry, *pleonexia*—have more. Henry Rogers, in a late work, speaks of a man who always gave a guinea to each of certain good objects. This person at length received a bequest which, he says, "might be made the basis of a fine estate." He caught the idea of increasing—rather, that caught him. When asked the next time for his donation to an object approved, though more was justly expected, nothing was received; not a penny would he give: but a reason he gave; and the sum of it was, that now he had something considerable in hand, and there was a satisfaction in making it more. Before, there was no such object in keeping, so he freely gave; now there was an object, and every little he kept told on the result. So he kept it, and so he would not give. Just here we have the secret why men, prospered in the world, perpetually swelling their gains, are proportionally slender givers, often the most grudging and stinted in their giving; while those who eat up their income, and not enough at that, those who have made up their mind to do good in the land, and trust God to be fed, are among the foremost in generous deeds. On the one side it is the purpose, the desire to get and to add, that dwarfs the soul so ignominiously; on the other, it is the purpose, all for God, which fashions the soul to that largeness and generous doing. And in the latter case, not only is the measure made over admirable; the manner of it, the freeness and heartiness, make it still more so. Such an one has not, on every presentation of

charity, to wage a bitter warfare with the base and servile part of himself; has not to debate and contend with and wring at length a few reluctant driblets out of a dry, hard, tyrant passion, who is allowed the keys; has not to go and pound and importune, as it were, at the tight door of a gloomy iron box, constructed for a smooth passage in, but a most rubbing passage out. Behold! see how pitiably poor the little creature is! How dreadful hard it comes! Taking from him his money, is very much as if you tore off the flakes of his flesh; and we can seem to see the wry face he twists into, under the agony of the parting. To the man of the other sort, with the heat and lust for more summarily quelled—the great purpose, all for God and human welfare, kept dominant; to him, it is the sweetest and best of all privileges to give. He welcomes every authentic application; even searches for the opportunity, and blesses the man who furnishes him with one. He finds the words of the Lord Jesus true, when he said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." All is turned to a pure heart—comfort—a fresh fountain of happiness.

We see how important it is, that one have at the bottom and the beginning, right principle. It is a grand regulator. One right principle at the head and fountain of conduct, puts and keeps every thing in the region of it and resulting therefrom, right also. And a principle like the one we have now stated, thus generic and summary in the prevention of evil and the production of good, has herein a proof that it is right, and is of God. Just

see what it does. This one word, giving, carried through on this principle, succeeds to blot out those other traitorous and engulfing words—will to be rich—among the most tainting and deadly in all the human vocabulary. Planted here, doing this, no taint shall ever touch you; no ill-gotten gain shall ever sear your conscience or burn your palm. The clustering graces of holiness, the rather, will gather around and adorn your character. All that is given will go with freeness and joy; and the result, the amount imparted, shall stand in the end as a noble monument, not of merit but of grace—the soul's treasure passed over, laid up on the other side, its own inalienable possession, the glory and wealth of its immortality.

Not only shall you be blest in your character and deed, but those connected with and dependent upon you, shall be blest through you, as your intent and prosperous hoarding never could have blessed them. Hence, in another sense, all things are clean unto you. By this standard and course of beneficence, by this example of piety, by the prayers which go up from a heart thus pervaded and consecrated, by such large outgoes of charity as shall keep down the hope of inherited wealth in those coming after, you help form an atmosphere of purity for children to breathe and grow up in. The property which,—fast held and to the last skillfully rolled up, would have been a snare to them, an omnipresent temptation, as it commonly is, and would have taken away their manly strength, and salient aspiration, and achieving enterprise, as it commonly does, dooming them, and passing them,

with rare exceptions, to the shades of insignificance and blank nothingness in creation, as is most obtrusively and painfully the case—this property, dealt with and disbursed on the other principle, is charged with no such perils, is changed wholly to another, a vital element and issue. The carnal and corrupting given, the spiritual is received, and so the treasures of your home become vastly greater and richer. The crowning good is, that all is clean; your hands clean; your reputation clean; your soul, through grace, clean; your children, through the same grace, clean; all these clean to you.

We should love to commend, could we do it, this principle of repressed selfishness and of enthroned benevolence to that great company of disciples, who have recently been brought into the kingdom of Christ. How remarkable have been God's dealings with the people since this Board held its last Annual Meeting: the business of the world, by a sudden stroke and shock, thrown into confusion, into complex and prostrating disaster; men's hearts failing them, distress and ruin settling down upon all ranks and conditions; then, directly upon this, almost simultaneous with it, the heavens opened and poured down righteousness, and myriads have been made rich in the inalienable possession. How fitting, that those who have come in, and are still coming, we trust, amid circumstances so significant, and outpourings of the Spirit so indicative of the grandeur of prophecy, should join to inaugurate a new order of piety; rather to bring back again the primitive order and type! We

would beg of this company of new disciples, could we speak to them, to take their stand for Christ; resolved to live a life of singleness and generousness to the Master and the race he is redeeming.

Only let it be so; this elect company coming along to be such givers and workers, and still rising higher in this divine scale, then shall they inspire even veteran breasts with fresh assurances of success, bring light and cheer amid worldly depression and gloom. Then will they be an honor to Christianity, a new argument of its verity, and an added force to send it to the remote, and apply it to those near.

We have reason to take courage from this living accession God is making to us. We may not repine at the great secular catastrophe and revulsion, but accept it as a just discipline, and be thankful even for those quick-working breaks in the invisible enginery of God's providence, which bring men to a stop in season not to leap the precipice.

We welcome these fresh co-workers, because, coming in as they do, we calculate that they come to be whole men—altogether on one side—that they come by that singular sort of consecration which gives up all to the Lord—body and soul, the man and the money—not trying to stand somewhere between, as if adjusting and connecting those great antagonisms, God and mammon; just where any quantity of professing Christians seem to be standing; I mean, *are* standing; and what they are doing; doing nothing as they ought to do, nothing largely and worthily for the Master;

cankered, eaten all through with the rust of selfishness; spoiled for any noble, Christian work.

To any persons remotely meditating the hopes or the profession of Christianity, we say, neither the Church nor the world wants any more such Christians.

These anomalies of discipleship, these abnormals of the kingdom, who lay down a part of the price—give their carcasses and keep back their coffers; they bring neither power, nor credit, nor a blessing.

Is it not an astounding fact, when there is so much created in order to be given, and when there are so many professed servants, new created of God, who hold it and are bound to give it; the oath of consecration most solemnly upon them; a world needing it; the world all thrown open to receive it, or the gospel it might send; its millions upon millions brought into vicinage; and when we may come directly to them, and impress them, and mould them, and put them in the way to heaven; and yet that the Church fails most frequently and decisively in meeting the cost, as though she could not afford to set her dollars against the redemption of these souls. I fear she hardly puts down annually a dime against a soul. The men to go are oftener on hand—it is the money that lags.

It does seem often as though the worst, the most cruel form of selfishness, is this which links itself with religion and religious people. Oh! this selfishness of the new man, this Christian worldliness, this baptized carnality, this holy greed of gain; what a demoniac heart thou hast. Accursed

shape! hellish thing! away from our temples and our hearts! Let the Master come, if he must, with his scourge of cords, and drive him out of our temples and our hearts; and himself possess us, and fill us with his own good Spirit.

But the blessed Master has another and a better way to purge out the evil, and take the possession, namely, by his truth and grace. This is the doctrine of the text, and of all his Gospel. The Christian character is benevolence—the spirit of sacrifice and of work for a lost world. A missionary spirit is the measure of it; a giving spirit, at once the measure and the promoter of it.

Giving, then, is one of the means of grace—one of the best means of spiritual growth. If no good externally is done by the gifts, the charities, still a vital and immeasurable good is done to the giving soul; enough, and vastly more than enough, to justify the deed. The sordid taunt so often thrown, "Why all this waste?" it comes of the sordidness that is equal to the sale of the Lord himself—the thirty pieces in the pocket better than He. I repeat, if no other good is done, there is no waste; no matter what the amount given, be it only enough, if done with the Christian motive, then the character is set forward, and the Church is brought up higher and nearer to the millennial state. The Church must pass through the work and the sacrifice of establishing the millenium abroad, in order to make one in her own pale. Those final words of her Lord, then, which lay upon her this amazing responsibility, 'Go preach the Gospel—evangelize all nations;' are to her

an untold heritage of blessings and of blessedness. They embody the corrective and expulsion of her deadliest foes; they are to her the necessary means of the victory, and the kingdom and the crown; I mean on this ground of attainment—personal, separate fitness, reached by the culture and through the conflict of beneficent giving and doing. The question before us is, Will we meet these conditions, and have the millenium at home; the kingdom within us—not forgetting the one condition our Lord so significantly marks—giving alms of such things as we have?

To very many, this, as a means of grace—of spiritual advance—stands in the first place, and is indispensable; stands in a sense even before prayer—they being ahead in prayer, behind in giving. To all those, then, who have given leanly and grudgingly, we say, Arise and give—give bountifully—give heartily—give willfully—just because something within resists and says, I won't. Give the more and still more, from the very teeth and grip of the old retaining passion. Give with the measure and intent to crucify it;—that hundred the nail, that thousand the spike, that ten thousand the spear, and so proceed and persist till the base and slimy thing is wholly dead.

And in our dealings with others—the minister, in his appeals to his people, must come to them with some authority, with a worthy object, and with a sizable claim. A small matter will not do the business with men, taking them as they rise. The heart of the majority is so snugly shut up—the orifice not unfrequently all tight and

twisted and gnarled—if you would come upon it with any likelihood, it must be, not merely with a sharp tool, but with some bulk and weight. Pry at it with a massive lever; some little local appeal will not make a passage. The field is the world—the instrument also. Then make the big world into a wedge, and drive that in, and so you shall succeed, and they and the world shall be the better for it.

Giving—doing—sacrificing, on the right scale, is not the only means of grace to ourselves; it is the secret of power in what we do for the needy or perishing. Money so given that it does us good in the giving, does, we believe, vastly more good in its going forth. It takes, so to speak, an embalming and vitalizing from the heart it leaves, which gives it, or the truth it commissions, an imbedding in the hearts it goes to. A thorough victory over selfishness, achieved and shown on the part of Christians and the Church, becomes the miracle of the Gospel—its moral sign, which opens a path for it to the souls of skeptical or idolatrous men. What economy appears in the arrangement of means and what responsibility it imposes, that our condition of power toward the world is simply that the Gospel, by our whole reception of it, has become a power upon us—first, a power upon us, then a power within, and a power emanant. The Gospel living in us, and working out, is its own witness. In this condition, we need spend no time in preliminaries, none in philosophizing or proving. Filled full of it ourselves, that is the argument; and overflowing, that the argument; and giving bounti-

fully, and intently working for the good of others, that the argument. So was it with the Apostle Paul. Mighty as he was in the tread of his logic when he chose, in the main he was his own argument—moved over lands and seas, himself a colossal demonstration. The same with the Christians then—their character, the reign of love throughout, their total conquest of selfishness, no man calling anything he possessed his own; that their argument. What they did, history tells us, and we shall repeat the achievement when we repeat the character, and not till then. Our first responsibility is to be what we ought to be, and what we may be. The path is all open to the attainment, the Divine Helper open to our access; to him let us come, with hearts open and longing to receive the replenishments of good which shall eject the evil—those enrichments of grace, those treasured gifts of salvation, that repletion of the love divine, which shall make us ready, eager even, for any work or sacrifice fitted to advance the kingdom and the glory of the Master.